

## ***Kritik* and Religion in German Intellectual History**

This bibliography compiles works stretching from the Prussian Empire, through World War I, to post World War II. It draws on a number of fields, from idealism to dialectical materialism, from social sciences to theology. The works gathered also come from around the world: authors from Germany, the United States, Austria, Japan, and France are represented. Despite this diversity, what holds together this bibliography is a single concept and a particular question.

The concept is “critique,” a term which at first glance seems to have so many iterations, some of them conflicting with each other, that it teeters on the brink of vacuousness. What, for instance, does David Strauss’s critique of the biblical narrative of Jesus have in common with Georg Lukács’s critique of the literary form of the novel? How does one hold together Kant’s critique of reason with Marx’s critique of ideology? This bibliography does not seek to present a definition of critique, nor does it dissolve the rich plurality of the works listed into a reductionistic structure or movement of thought. Nevertheless, it illuminates an interesting site of historical reflection. In various forms, from the idealism of Kant to the materialism of Feuerbach, the rejection of theology and religion by Nietzsche to Tillich’s argument for religious socialism, this bibliography traces a development of thought which, while not collapsible into a single, abstracted definition, can be followed. And in tracing the development of critique, in its various reversals and turns, an understanding of each work can be enhanced, and an idea of critique can itself begin to be formulated. This bibliography thus traces this notion, *Kritik*, out of German intellectual history, and it seeks to bring together works which are often intentionally held apart in the interest of preserving disciplinary boundaries and protecting particular narratives of thought. A common origin between the “higher criticism” of biblical studies and the leftist turn of Hegelian thought by

the Young Hegelians is uncovered. The influence of the theologian Karl Barth on Karl Popper, a philosopher of science connected to the Vienna Circle, is brought to light.

But it is not simply the recurrence of the notion of critique that holds these bibliographies together. It is guided by a question that concerns religion and its relation to the public sphere. Marx writes in his *A Contribution to the Critique of Hegel's Philosophy of Right* that the prerequisite of all criticism is that of religion. And we do in fact see the critique of religion already in Kant, the figure with whom this bibliography begins. But rather than attempting to erase all faith or piety from the mind and from society, Kant's critique of religion turns out to be driven by a concern for how a rational faith might play a part in the development of the cosmopolitan humanity he envisioned. Feuerbach's contention that all theology is in fact anthropology, equally, is not merely "destructive," as he himself notes: It aims to promote a love for the humanity which lies behind the supposedly illusory garb of "God" to effect a more just world. Paul Tillich critiques the obsession of Nazi national socialism with mythical origins in order to furnish a theory of religious socialism with an eschatological expectation of a liberated world.

The question extends, however, beyond how a conception of the public coincides with a conception of religion. A broader issue is whether critique can itself be thought of as a public act, and thus whether the critique of religion can be seen as submitting religion to the public sphere. Kant's essay, positioned second in this bibliography, presents the free political act of citizens as one which stands in contrast to the participation of each person with a machine-like division of labor. It is a specifically verbal and critical act—a venture of critique. Karl Popper's vision of an "open society" is one in which all theories are brought under the criticism of a reason freed from all totalizing pictures of history and society. Tanabe, at the close of the second World War, figures philosophy as a public repentance [*metanoesis*] for the participation of faulty forms of thinking in

the atrocities of war. This bibliography, then, seeks to present a terrain in which one might conceive of critique as a public act, a verbal publication which presents religion in a form that calls for public judgment—or, as Benjamin puts it, advances an exhibition of critique’s object for the interpretation of the public. As Troeltsch notes, in their being written and published, even the judgment of what religion (in this case Christianity) is, casts itself into the horizon of history as a subjective judgment which opens itself up to readers and their judgment.

## **BEGINNINGS: THE PRUSSIAN EMPIRE**

### **Critical Idealism**

In his first *Critique*, the *Critique of Pure Reason*, Kant declares that his is an age of critique, where all things—particularly theology, which once wore the crown as the queen of the sciences—will be subjected to a reason freed from the despotism of unreflective thought. Critique of reason, the establishment of its limits and possibilities, is at once its liberation. This bibliography presents this claim as the beginnings of modern *Kritik*. From Kant to Hegel, critical idealism involves a turn from initial appearance to reflection on the mind, the conditions for thought. In its various iterations, it places religion and theology under the light of critique, so as to interpret them as serviceable for a new public sphere, being amenable to a vision of a modern state that forms a whole out of free citizens.

Immanuel Kant. “An Answer to the Question: ‘What is Enlightenment?’” in *Kant: Political Writings*. Edited by Hans Reiss. Translated by H. B. Nisbet. Cambridge: Cambridge UP, 2016, pp. 54-60. (1784)

This essay shows how Kant’s three *Critiques* come together in his political theory. The two-sidedness of the human—that is, her existence as both a phenomenal “object” determined by natural laws in time and space and as free subject—coincides with the dual nature of citizenship. Just as the mutually exclusive realms of reason, the understanding of knowledge and the reason of moral freedom, converge in the third critique in judgment, the citizen who is bound by his specific vocation is at the same time free in his public use of reason as a legislating sovereign of the state. Religion is not exempted from this rule; every practitioner of religion, as a free citizen, is given the freedom to subject the faith to the critique of reason.

----- *Religion Within The Bounds of Bare Reason*. Translated by Werner Pluhar. Indianapolis: Hackett Publishing Co., 2009. (1793)

In the same way that Kant’s critique of reason is meant to establish knowledge and freedom purely *a priori* in reason itself, this work seeks to establish a purely rational religion. It therefore also

forms a critique of reason which brings together reason in its two modes, knowledge and morality. The critique delimits religion “within the bounds of bare reason,” and thus frees it from any dependence on the “authority” of tradition. This pure religion of reason, however, as a pure idea, in the same way that the idea of the moral good becomes the idea of the kingdom of ends, turns out to be an ideal concept. The church is postulated as a mediating institution that will help facilitate the development of a cosmopolitan humanity, wherein all humans will be freed from all empirical determinations.

Fichte, Johann Gottlieb, *Attempt at a Critique of All Revelation*. Translated by Garrett Green. Cambridge: Cambridge UP, 2010. (1792).

Largely in alignment with Kant’s threefold critique of Reason, Fichte critiques the notion of revelation. But like many other works in this bibliography, “critique” does not mean the mere negation of an idea. It is a matter of demarcating the proper ground and limits of revelation, so as to exhibit its conditions of possibility. The basis for any justification of revelation is found in practical reason, in its agreement with the moral law. But the empirical aspect of revelation, as well as the material of revealed religion, is given greater focus in Fichte than in Kant. Revelation therefore finds a positive significance of representing morality and motivating moral actors with a sense of the law having been communicated to them by God.

Hegel, G.W.F. *Phenomenology of Spirit*. Translated by Terry Pinkard. Cambridge: Cambridge UP, 2018. (1807)

This work can largely be read as a critical response to Kant’s own critique, the basis for which was set by the establishment of an irreconcilable contrast—the realm of phenomena and the purely negative realm of noumena. The dialectical contrast adopted by Kant is taken up into a history, wherein each moment of negation is, by virtue of being taken up into consciousness, at once preserved in the new moment of consciousness and negated in its previous form. A history is written in *Phenomenology*, previous steps are synthesized in an ever-progressing consciousness. This all takes place under the ideal of Absolute Knowledge in which finally, Religion, particularly Christianity, with its differentiation between Mind and God, gives way to a perfect, absolute synthesis of concepts (*Begriffe*).

### **The “Young Hegelians” & Materialism**

From Hegel’s students, a group of leftist intellectuals emerged who sought to push Hegel’s dialectical engagement with history in more radical directions. Although the Young Hegelians criticize their teacher for his idealism and make materiality their point of departure, one discerns a clear continuity between Hegel’s style of reflection and that of his mostly critical students. The material object, whether the Bible, “Christianity,” or socioeconomic conditions, becomes an object of critique as reflection frees it from the sphere of unreflection. Though most pronounced in Marx, history emerges as an important element of critique at this point. This section might even have been titled “historicism.” The confidence of Kant to be able to present the purely a priori structure of reason, independent of time or place, is overpowered by an interest in the dynamics of history and its influence on thought. In Marx, even the moment of reflection is caught up in the economic conditions of the thinker.

Strauss, David Friedrich, *The Life of Jesus Critically Examined*. Translated by Marian Evans. St. Clair Shores, MI, Scholarly Press, 1970. (1835)

This work could easily have been placed under “Higher Criticism,” because of its later influence in the historical criticism of the Bible. But it also marks an important appropriation of Hegel’s philosophy for radical, politically and ecclesiastically “progressive” reform. Strauss’s “mythical” reading of the New Testament’s presentation of Jesus draws a line between the text and the modern reader, postulating a distance which requires critical interpretation to extract the essential content of the mythical form. Such interpretation enables the content of scripture to be articulated in modern, philosophical, and decidedly Hegelian terms. A text from which the modern reader might otherwise be estranged from, then, is able to be translated for the public use of present, modern society.

Feuerbach, Ludwig Andreas. “Towards a Critique of Hegel,” in *The Fiery Brook: Selected Writings of Ludwig Feuerbach*. Translated and Edited by Zawar Hanfi. New York: Verso, 2012. (1839)

Against the claim that Hegel’s is the absolute philosophy, Feuerbach subjects Hegel’s work to critique. In particular, Feuerbach argues that Hegel’s work purports to be a kind of incarnation of the absolute. Yet this very embodiment of the idea, having been written down, now appears as a historical object, a text that only gains meaning insofar as it is taken up again in later temporal moments. It must itself be subjected to dialectical reflection, and it thus is thrust back into the field of history. In other words: Hegel’s dialectical “ought” is not a final word; it should be read as the historical expression of an idea which, upon being read, can be negated and treated as an occasion for a new moment of thought. Critique, on this reckoning, is an attentiveness to the public nature of thought in writing which in turn implies and calls for future critique. A critical account, further, requires for Feuerbach a closer attentiveness to the sensory, the material, in contradistinction to Hegel, whom Feuerbach charges as becoming purely self-referential in abstract idealism.

----- *The Essence of Christianity*. Translated by George Elliot. Amherst, NY: Prometheus Books, 1989. (1841)

Both critic and student of Hegel and a member of the so-called “Young Hegelians,” Feuerbach subjects religion, particularly Christianity, to critique. This critique involves issues from what he calls an anti-speculative and strictly materialist method. It is further differentiated from “merely negative” reflection, in that it is at once negative and positive. It is negative in the sense that it negates the “anti-human” and illusionary aspects of religion. It is positive in the sense that from the negation, he unveils its hidden, secret “treasure” (xvi), namely that the content and essence of religion is humanity.” So unveiled, he asserts that now humanity can love itself directly, not derivatively in and from God, and thus can consider itself, in its concrete physical existence, as sacred in itself.

Marx, Karl. “Theses on Feuerbach,” in *The German Ideology, Including Theses on Feuerbach and Introduction to the Critique of Political Economy*, Amherst, NY: Prometheus Books, 1998.

In this series of eleven theses, Marx launches a critique against the form of materialism set forth by the Young Hegelians, with a particular focus on Ludwig Feuerbach's *The Essence of Christianity*. Marx's distinctive contribution to the notion of critique is to conceive ideology as produced by and reflective of concrete, material relations. Whereas Feuerbach uncritically asserts that the basis and content of the "essence of religion" is "the human essence," demarcating the moment of his own reflection as that of a contemplative revolution of consciousness, Marx asserts that the alienation of the human in religion is the product of a concrete, material division in social relations. Feuerbach's failure to grasp this point, he claims, derives from the fact that his materialism is itself a reification of civil society and is not fundamentally concerned with changing the material conditions of humanity. The world that constitutes the material conditions is itself, despite the illusion that it is either natural or divinely ordained, a product of social, human activity—and is therefore able to be changed.

### Friedrich Nietzsche

This bibliography places Nietzsche in a category of his own because he does not fit neatly in either idealist or materialist camps. It is also important to note that Nietzsche's method of criticism resists the historicism of Hegel and his followers. Nietzsche presents a genealogy to uncover the origins of morality and religion. Further, and unlike Feuerbach, he does not seek to preserve their essential content; he opposes that very content. His genealogy thus uncovers not only the contingency of its object, but also its illusionary, deceptive function. Whereas it appears and claims to be one thing, namely the moral differentiation of good and evil, it is in fact a discourse created for the sake of power and dominance.

Friedrich Nietzsche. "On the Advantage and Disadvantage of History for Life." Translated by Peter Preuss. Indianapolis: Hackett Publishing Co., 1980. (1874)

An early work of Nietzsche's, this essay works out both a mode of critique and notion of history which clarifies his *Genealogy*. History has limited value, only insofar as it serves to further human life. He sees this as a clear contrast to Hegel's glorification of the dialectical historical process. A clear, critical distinction is made, anticipatory of the *Genealogy*, between the past, on the one hand, and the present of life, on the other. This distinction enables a remove from which the material of the past can be placed in the service of the possibility of life. The function of history for life, then, is ultimately to spur aesthetic activity, so that the past is represented in such a way as to have relevance and advantage for life in the present.

----- . *Genealogy of Morals*. Translated by Carol Diethe. New York: Cambridge University Press, 2010. (1887)

This critique is the first in this bibliography to take the form of *genealogy*. Nietzsche claims that this form is meant to expose the historicity and thus contingency of what is commonly taken to be given, namely the moral distinction between good and evil. This notion of altruistic morality, constituted by a metaphysical differentiation of the good from the evil, ultimately originates in the *ressentiment* of the weak and oppressed. This *ressentiment* gains an illusionary garb via religious metaphysics, particularly those of Judaism and Christianity, but it ultimately suffocates and represses the flourishing of humanity ("Bad air! Bad air!"). Genealogy, on the other hand, serves to clear the air and to open up space for a "new prospect," a different future.

### **Higher Criticism (Biblical and Theological)**

It is valuable to read the founding works of higher criticism within the larger historical development of critique in German thought. It is interesting, too, to trace the ways in which these works seek to subject the scriptural texts to historical critique out of an interest in rescuing their significance for the present. From Baur to Troeltsch, critique is described as a public task, a reformulation of historical content in order to present it as useful for the modern state.

Baur, Ferdinand Christian, *Paul, the Apostle of Jesus Christ, His life and Work, His Epistles and His Doctrine. A contribution to a Critical History of Primitive Christianity*. Translated by Eduard Zeller. vol. 1. Edinburgh: Williams and Norgate, 1876.

Marking a fundamental shift in biblical and theological studies in Germany, this work establishes itself upon what Baur calls a new, critical “vantage-ground” of the present, which emancipates reflection on biblical texts from traditional ways of thinking to confront and give a scientific account of its own past, the history of Christianity. Hegel’s influence on Baur is apparent. Baur’s critical historicism is meant to assist him in the discovery of the “idea of Christianity and of its principle,” which entered into the “sphere of world-wide historical importance.” A surveying of the history, in other words, reveals the ideal that grounds and drives it. This historical task has as its fundamental concern a deeper understanding of the present moment through interrogating its origins, a critical task of self-consciousness, and as such, a fundamentally *public* task. Baur refers to this historical critique of “gospel history” as “the most important object of the critical labours of our time,” because of Christianity’s “universal historical importance.”

Harnack, Adolf von. *What is Christianity? Lectures Delivered at Berlin University of Berlin During the Winter-Term 1899-1900*. Translated by Thomas Bailey Saunders. Leopold Classic Library, 2018. (1901)

Harnack’s position is representative of a time in which thought has accomplished a “shaking off [of] an authoritative religion.” In this present, however, orientation is needed by means of ideals. But there still needs to be a turn to the past. There needs to be an accurate, critically historical presentation of Christianity, empty of apologetic or dogmatic concerns, that funds normative principles for today. Indeed, it is by way of the subjection of Christianity to the critique of scientific, historical inquiry that Christians can discover the essential meaning and value of the religion, liberating it from of extraneous, inessential baggage and grasping anew the normativity of Christ as the starting point for the outgrowth of the Kingdom of God. From this critical standpoint, Harnack claims he can survey the various historical forms the essence of Christianity has taken, both in its “Jewish” and “Hellenic” forms, and from this surveying, apprehend the essence in its totality.

Troeltsch, Ernst, “What Does ‘Essence of Christianity’ Mean?” in *Ernst Troeltsch: Writings on Theology and Religion*. Edited by Robert Morgan and Michael Pye. Atlanta: John Knox, 1977. (1903)

A critical response to Harnack, Troeltsch asserts that any engagement with historical material involves an investment of reason in the material, an “imaginative” disposition and action that

engages the reading of the historical material. The historical material of Christianity, in other words, is given meaning by its critical appropriation in the present, wherein the judgment of its essence is linked to a subjective aspect, put forth as a historical act and submitted to future critical judgment. In this sense, Harnack's conception of the discernment of the "essence" of Christianity is rendered a public task or project. Troeltsch also gestures towards a theological account of the essence, as the "redemptive presence and holy rule of God" breaking in through the medium of history, as a normative criterion for the present, and thus also as a critique of the present in view of this criterion.

### **Social Sciences**

Both Durkheim and Weber evince influences from the intellectual circles listed above. Both the philosophy of science developed by neo-Kantian philosophers, as well as the materialist and empirical turn, underwrite Weber's and Durkheim's turn to social phenomena as objects of scientific study. These books, beyond being founding texts for the social sciences, can also be read as within the tradition of *Kritik*; and it is no coincidence, too, that these critiques touch on the theme of religion and the public sphere. One finds here a continued attempt to develop a specifically secular and scientific mode of reflection that can bring their objects into a new light, and Weber and Durkheim can be seen, in their own way, to be developing theories of how a collective, public sphere is possible in light of religious activities and convictions.

Max Weber, *The Protestant Work Ethic and The Spirit of Capitalism*. Translated by Peter Baehr and Gordon C. Wells. New York: Penguin, 2002. (1905)

The influence of this work can be seen in many of the later works listed in this bibliography, although most explicitly in the works of Adorno and Horkheimer. Weber links the emergence of Calvinism with the rise of capitalism which reevaluates the world – and, more particularly, in its "disenchantment" of the world. This notion of disenchantment opens up a new secularized space of human life which will later assist leftist thinkers to think of human labor, and also sets the stage for critical interrogations of "modernity" and its relation to Christianity. It is the disenchantment of labor, as well as the sites of labor, that carves out a public space as the stage for the pursuit of profit and wealth. According to Weber, his own contemporary context is marked by a separation of the Protestant work ethic, which aided the development of capitalism, from its religious roots.

Durkheim, Emil. *Elementary Forms of Religion*. Translated by Carol Cosman. Oxford: Oxford UP, 2008. (1914)

One of the founding works of Western social science, this work construes religion as the original basis of social collectivity. A collective consciousness is objectified in a symbol, like the totems of the aboriginal communities in Australia that Durkheim he studied (at a distance!), thereby allowing the collective to become conscious of itself. So objectified, this basis of collectivity takes on an independence in the form of the symbol, as the space of the sacred which at once signifies deities as well as society — a claim that is obviously similar to Feuerbach's analysis of Christianity in particular and religion in general. The unifying symbols, then, can be seen as establishing a shared space, the precondition for a "public." Furthermore, one senses a fundamental critical stance being constructed in the work: a standpoint from which social facts become objects for

scientific reflection, and a stance of critical remove from which these phenomena can be put into the language of sociological science.

### POST-WORLD WAR I: WEIMAR REPUBLIC

We observe an interesting merging of different intellectual discourses during the Weimar period. In the social theories of the Frankfurt School, there is a convergence not only of the works of Weber and Marx, but also of Hegel and Kant. (Walter Benjamin, for instance, wrote his doctoral dissertation on the Jena Romantics, including Fichte.) One of the most influential thinkers of this era, Martin Heidegger, bears the mark of Neo-Kantianism. His dealing with the problem of beginning an enquiry—how, in other words, one begins to pursue the question of being without a preceding principle of it—is resolved in ways reminiscent of the Kantian assertion that one can only know about a thing which one has already placed in it as the basis for knowledge. No longer under the conditions of censorship which prevailed during the Prussian Empire and trying to imagine a new future for Germany post-Great War, these works appropriate ideas of the past for a new historical moment.

Freud, Sigmund, *Totem and Taboo*. Translated by Peter Gay. New York: W. W. Norton & Co., 1990. (1913)

Freud's speculation concerning the origins of social cohesion, a large part of which is played by religion, is explicitly prefaced by a contemporary concern—how to understand ourselves. An account of contemporary society is given indirectly and comparatively, via a psychoanalysis of “primitive” peoples and their totem and taboo practices. Rather than merely postulating a distant historical origin of present society, then, Freud's speculation creates a space removed from his present context, a critical vantage point from which he can analyze. Freud finds at the heart of “primitive” societies, and thus by extension to modern civilization, the origin of the Oedipus complex, which religion seeks to overcome.

Lukács, Georg, *Theory of the Novel*. Translated by Anna Bostock. New York: MIT Press, 1974. (1916)

Although chiefly concerned with the novel as a distinctively modern work of literature, this book presents an influential account of modernity. The modern situation, the age of the novel, is placed alongside its counterpart, the age of the epic. The temporal designation of “modernity” is thus mediated through a comparative reading of literary forms. The novel form betrays an ironic attempt to produce meaning in a world which has been stripped of any semblance of a meaningful, cosmic totality. Interestingly, Lukács situates Christian theology, namely the work of Dante, as itself a distinctive literary form standing between the heroic epic and the ironic novel. Dante's literature, on this reckoning, is a momentous work which achieves an epic sense of a meaningful totality by deferring to the transcendent. “It is the perfect immanence of the transcendent.”

Cohen, Hermann, *The Religion of Reason Out of the Sources of Judaism*. Translated by Simon Kaplan. Atlanta, GA: Scholars Press, 1995. (1919)

While Judaism figures problematically in many of the works in this bibliography, often serving as the irrational strawman against which the rational is established, Cohen turns this foil on its head. The historical literary sources of Judaism are subjected to critical reason, which lays a foundation and direction for itself in the reading of the historical material, so as to present it as a religion of reason. This, Cohen claims, is not a liberation of Reason from a dogmatic tradition, but rather the uncovering of Reason as the basis of and ultimate source of Jewish faith as it struggles against its historical origins in myth. The work can thus be read as doubly critical. First and largely implicitly, it criticizes the tradition of the German Enlightenment and its treatment of Judaism. Second, it critiques Reason itself, largely along Kant's lines, through an engagement with Jewish tradition, in order to show that religion, Judaism specifically, has its legitimate share in reason, and that religion furnishes concepts indispensable for ethics, such as the "Thou" (a concept that has proven influential both in philosophy and theology).

Barth, Karl. *Epistle to the Romans*. Translated by Edwyn C. Hoskyns. New York: Oxford UP, 1968. (1922)

For Barth, the historical-critical method, as put forth by Adolf von Harnack, is not critical enough. This groundbreaking work began a shift in European theological conversations that would later be called "dialectical theology." Barth interprets the Epistle to the Romans in the critical light of revelation. It is the revelation of God in Jesus Christ, argues Barth, that brings about the most radical critique against all ideology, which itself stems from the idolatrous drive of sin. Humans fashion God after their own image, so that theology becomes a reification of the sinful mode of existence. Revelation shatters the imprisonment of God in human projections. Theological reflection, correspondingly, is set into motion as critique as it seeks to witness, indirectly, to God's revelation. Divine revelation, therefore, grounds a distinctively theological mode of critique.

Benjamin, Walter. *The Origin of German Tragic Drama*. Translated by George Steiner. Brooklyn, NY: Verso, 2009. (1925)

Originally written as his *Habilitationschrift* and ultimately rejected by his faculty, among whom was Max Horkheimer, this work brings to light an often-overlooked form of theater from an often-overlooked time frame—the baroque "tragic drama" (*Trauerspiel*). Benjamin finds in this kind of play [*Spiel*] a staging of a playing [*spielen*] of form. Such a playful turn to form, the master of which he finds in Shakespeare and Calderón, is only possible with the radical transformation of perception and thought accomplished in the aftermath of the Reformation, which evacuated any semblance of a harmony between nature/history and theological meaning. With this mourning-filled [*Trauer*] situation of the loss of theological meaning comes hand in hand with a cleared, sober view of nature as history. A "Saturnine" vision surveys a history now appearing as decay and ruin, so as to expose what was previously taken as natural in its transience. In this work Benjamin, along with his theory of modernity, develops and performs his theory of critique. Critique accomplishes an "erosion" which strips away mystifying beauty and exposes the historicity of the work. Critique, he writes, "means the mortification of the works...the settlement of knowledge in dead ones."

Heidegger, Martin. *Being and Time*. Translated by Dennis J. Schmidt. New York: SUNY Press, 2010. (1927)

In this book, Heidegger follows the path established by Nietzsche's critique of metaphysics. His philosophical reflections on Being consists of what he calls *Destruktion*, a critical engagement with tradition. This fits in the larger and central task of recovering the philosophical question of the meaning of Being. To do so, he attends to that particular being, *Dasein*, for which Being is a matter of concern, and which as such possesses the possibility to disclose Being. Temporality, as the distinctive mode of *Dasein*'s being, requires an engagement with tradition, namely the Western ontological tradition, which at once carries possibilities and conceals them under the guise of self-evident givenness. But this engagement requires a crisis of tradition via its *destruction*, a reading of it in its historicity, so as to loosen it up and clear away an opening to disclose the possibility of the historical tradition to new use.

### WORLD WAR II AND AFTER

This section begins with the rise of Nazism in Germany, during which time many of the writers listed had to flee Germany, and it ends in the nineteen sixties. The realities of nationalism, mass violence, and the horrors of Auschwitz loom large in these works. We see many themes of previous works—Weber's disenchantment, Marx's critique of ideology, Nietzsche's genealogy, and most important for this bibliography, the notion of "critique"—be taken up to understand what lies before these thinkers. "Critical theory" becomes a category of its own, developing out of the older forms of critique, by the Frankfurt School. The grounding of critique in future ideals is radicalized by Bloch's utopianism. The Kyoto School, a philosophical school largely influenced by Heidegger, work out of the German intellectual tradition in conversation with Zen Buddhism. We also find the right-wing critique of Carl Schmitt, whose account of the nation and the state mirrors, if not intentionally recapitulates, Nazi ideology. But we also find leftist theologies which insist that theology has its own distinctive grounds for critique of ideology. These works, which remain influential in much contemporary discourse, placed in the larger context of this bibliography, helps situate contemporary discourse within a larger historical picture.

Schmitt, Carl, *The Concept of the Political*. Translated by George Schwab. Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2007. (1932)

Published a year prior to Hitler's appointment as Chancellor, this essay seeks to critique liberalism by exposing its previously hidden basis, the "political." The political is constituted by the opposition between friend and enemy; thus, the origin and heart of social cohesion is the immanent threat of the emergent situation of war. Liberal states deny and conceal this political basis. The descriptive statement that the state presupposes the political thus turns to a political goal—the liberal state must be replaced by a form of statehood in which the political nation coincides with the state. This replacement requires a sovereign dictator to establish a clear distinction between the domestic norms and the extremes which threaten them. Then, Schmitt argues, a homogenous political people can formally coincide with the state.

Popper, Karl. *The Open Society and Its Enemies*. New York: Routledge Press, 2002. (1945)

Popper's theory of falsifiability, influential in the philosophy of science, is here applied to political theory. Both Plato and Marx are put forth as "enemies" of what Popper calls the "open society," a political ideal he relates to the Enlightenment project, the aim of a society liberated from all

heteronomy and nationalistic insularity which closes society off from the world. Both Plato and Marx put forth totalitarian claims of history which step beyond the boundaries of reason, insofar as “history” as a universal concept is impossible. Creeping behind the Marxist dialectic of history is what Popper calls an “idolatrous” historicism. The book concludes with a positive call for a more critical and reflective attitude which is self-conscious of the inherent finitude and falsifiability of any normative claims of politics. Barth is recruited as an ally in his philosophical and theological critique of any totalizing historicism.

Arendt, Hannah. *The Origins of Totalitarianism*. New York: Harvest Book, 1977. (1951)

The totalitarian regimes which caused the horrors of Auschwitz are here subjected by Arendt to critique. The function of critique in this work is to historicize antisemitism and totalitarianism. This critique bears resemblance to what Heidegger calls *Destruktion* insofar as it wrests the horrors of the totalitarianism of the mid-twentieth century out of obscurity and makes it the object of present reflection. Arendt exposes the historical preconditions for the totalitarian regimes of the twentieth century, namely anti-Semitism and imperialist expansion. These preconditions, however, are not the inevitable causes of totalitarianism. The latter is a distinctive moment, a radical break from what has come before, even as it appropriates elements for its own totalitarian ends. Subjecting totalitarianism to this sober, critical analysis, Arendt also gestures to the possibility of a different future, even if a fragile one.

### **The Frankfurt School**

We place alongside the actual members of the Institute for Social Research intellectuals who were associated with the institute. All of them of Jewish descent, and thus having been forced to flee Nazi Germany, we see a concern to subject anti-Semitism to critique. In the case of many of these thinkers, racial ideology and nationalism is theoretically linked to capitalism and modern industry. The works listed here call attention to the diverse lines of thought synthesized in these works. Note, further, that the “social theory” of the Frankfurt School works out of the social sciences, philosophy of science, Hegel, Marx, and German idealism, amongst others. It intends, on the one hand, to expose the dizzying extent to which ideology has penetrated and shaped human life; and, on the other hand, to shed light on the sites of possibility for transformation. Despite obvious differences between authors, the two-sidedness of this mode of reflection, while taking novel and individual form, is reminiscent of the dialectical mode of critique found in many earlier works. Perhaps more than ever, however, reflection itself is presented as a fundamentally historical activity, unable to completely free itself from the economic conditions to a purely transcendental position.

Benjamin, Walter. “The Work of Art in the Age of Mechanical Reproducibility,” in *Walter Benjamin: Selected Writings*, vol. 3. Edited and Translated by Howard Elland and Michael Jennings. Cambridge: Belknap Press, 2006. (1935)

Benjamin seeks to develop in this work an aesthetic theory “completely useless for the purposes of fascism.” This is accomplished by interrogating the value of the reproducibility [*Reproduzierbarkeit*] of artwork, especially in reference to film. An art form criticized by Adorno as propaganda of the capitalistic liquidation of value, film is for Benjamin a revolutionary moment in the development of the “exhibition value” of a work of art, in distinction from its “cultic value”

in previous religious associations. It is film's inherent link to "public presentability" which, in exhibiting a formal manipulation of a material that demands a critical interpretation, has the revolutionary potential to "conscientize" a public. Fascism seeks to "aestheticize politics" by attempting to appropriate capitalist forms of alienation to re-create a sense of cultic totality. Benjamin's theory, by contrast, politicizes art, presenting it as an object of critical contemplation.

Horkheimer, Max. "Traditional and Critical Theory," in *Critical Theory: Selected Essays*. Translated by Matthew O'Connell. New York: Continuum Publishing Co., 1975. pp. 188-243. (1937)

This earlier essay largely follows the line of argument in Marx's critique of Feuerbach. Similar to how Marx criticizes Feuerbach for losing sight of the economic structures within which the human is produced, and thus reifying the bourgeois order in his abstract notion of "man," Horkheimer criticizes "traditional" theory for its blindness to the structures of society in which it is embedded. The "conceptual apparatus" of theory thus both reflects and reinforces the structures which exploit the proletariat. Critical theory, by contrast, begins by taking these structures as its object. Theory becomes critical by placing the totality of society in the light of the ideal of emancipation. It is thus dialectical, two-sided, operating within the mechanics of society while refusing its finality, recognizing the ways in which freedom is negated in the present order of things. The dialectic aims at the resolution in which the contradiction will be *aufgehoben*.

Adorno, Theodor. "Cultural Criticism and Society," in *Prisms*. Translated by Samuel and Shierry Weber. Cambridge: MIT Press, 1967, pp. 17-34 (1951)

This essay presents Adorno's understanding of critique. He rejects what he claims is the typical mode of critique, namely the transcendental, which asserts complete freedom from culture. This supposed transcendence, Adorno argues, is simply the reverse side of culture, an abstract reification of the conditions from which it arises. Indeed, the asserted independence of both theory and of culture is what enables ideologies of purity which must stamp out its contradictions. Instead, Adorno argues for a dialectical or immanent mode of critique, one where thought moves constantly back and forth, from the matter of culture to reflection on it, in a "duality of moments." It is this constant movement which enables theory's resistance to reification. The dialectics of critique, far from seeking a reconciliation of opposites, constantly retains negative difference.

Horkheimer, Max. "Theism and Atheism," in *Critique of Instrumental Reason*. Translated by Matthew J. O'Connell. New York: The Continuum Publishing Co., 1994, pp.34-50. (1963)

A critical reflection on the history of Christianity in Europe by the later Horkheimer, this essay seeks to situate theism and atheism not as polar opposites, one signifying the good and the other evil; rather, it shows the ways in which both can stand with either oppression or resistance. The determinative point is its situation in relation to the regime of power. Christian theism in its original form, Horkheimer argues, was a protest against the dominating power, but quickly turned to domination self-preservation. Atheism along the lines of Marx and Engels initially formed a protest against capitalism, but quickly deformed into nationalism, such as in the Third Reich. At the core of European society, from its historical origins, is an antinomy between a messianic ideal and violence, a "pact" between the good and power. Both atheism and theism can stand on either

side, but what is critically significant is to “offer resistance, like the victims of the past and, among them, the founder of Christianity.”

Marcuse, Herbert. *One-Dimensional Man*. Boston: Beacon Press, 1964.

As noted throughout this bibliography, critical thought is two-dimensional. It refuses the necessity and finality of the status quo and seeks to expose the possibility of change, freeing thought into a negative space which enables reflection. The modern capitalist economy, Marcuse argues, represses this possibility. It creates a dimension of reality, consumerism, by producing needs and desires alienated from the actual material welfare of people. Against this illusionary one-dimensionality, Marcuse puts forth an anchor of critique, a “suprahistorical idea” of utopia, a practical ideal which at once grounds itself in history even while directing it to the project of an emancipated future.

Bloch, Ernst. *Man On His Own: Essays in the Philosophy of Religion*. Translated by E. B. Ashton. Edited by Jürgen Moltmann. New York: Herder and Herder, 1970.

This collection of essays takes excerpts from various of Bloch’s works which deal particularly with religion. Even as Bloch takes direction and influence from Marx in his critique of capitalism, Bloch nevertheless moves away from Marx’s Feuerbachian assertion that religion takes part in the self-alienating processes of capitalism. Instead, he finds in religion, particularly Christian biblical motifs, important resources for thinking of hope, a revolutionary affect which Bloch sees as interrupting a passive abdication for oppressive material conditions and creating the possibility of a critique of those conditions in the guiding light of the idea of a utopian future. The book has an introduction by the theologian Jürgen Moltmann, who dialogues with Bloch extensively in *The Theology of Hope* (1964).

### **Christian and Jewish Theology & Religious Philosophy**

Since the beginnings of the critical tradition, religion and theology have been a primary object of concern. Their relation to critical thought has been ambivalent. Although Kant sees a positive value to religion, already in Hegel we see an attempt to overcome religion, or at least translate its content out of its traditional, symbolic order. Yet even this “overcoming” is not a complete negation, but a placing of religion within a reflection of the past that is able, from a critical vantage point, to perceive and articulate its essential content (a move we see in Feuerbach, Strauss, Baur and many more). Thinkers such as Nietzsche and Marx, however, argue for humanity’s liberation from the illusions of religion. This section of the bibliography brings together theological and philosophical works which find a basis or principle of critique in religious thought. In the case of Barth and Tillich, this critique extends also to religion. One might argue that Barth’s critique of religion, already set forth in his *Romans*, is a theological radicalization of Marx’s critique.

Barth, Karl. *Church Dogmatics*, vol. 1, part 1. New York: T&T Clark, 2010. (1932)

In this first part to the prolegomena of his *Dogmatics*, Barth explicitly presents dogmatics as a *critical* task. This task is both grounded in and driven by revelation of God in Jesus Christ, which at once brings with it a promise of hope as well as the imperative under which dogmatics critically labors. Significantly, the critical task of dogmatics takes a critical historical turn within the sinful,

creaturely existence of human beings. This existence has now been relativized under the judgment of revelation. Barth thus turns back not only to Scripture, but also to the history of Christian thought, as well as his own historical moment, marked by the rise of German nationalism in the form of Nazism. Barth sees dogmatics as having a unique task of critique which can uniquely shed light not just on Christian theology in the abstract, but on his historical moment as well.

----- *Church Dogmatics*, vol. 4, part 4. New York: T&T Clark, 2010. (1967).

The last (and unfinished) volume of Barth's *Dogmatics*, this section can be read as developing an explicit political theology out of the dogmatic work of the preceding volumes. As Barth does in the Barmen Declaration, he finds a basis in the concept of the lordship of Christ for the critique of what he terms "lordless powers." This term can be read alongside Feuerbach's claim that theology is in fact anthropology, Durkheim's claim that the totem simultaneously symbolizes the deity and the collective, and Marx's claim that religion is the opiate of the masses. The "lordless powers" is Barth's term for the demonic, the ways in which human beings organize and conceptualize themselves in opposition to God, even as they base these organizations and conceptualizations in their own conception of "God." The lordship of Christ exposes these powers as nothing, as built on an illusion, and sets into motion a theological critique of the idolatrous organization of power.

Tillich, Paul. *Socialist Decision*. Translated by Franklin Sherman. Eugene, Or: Wipf and Stock Publishers, 2012. (1933)

This was Tillich's last book before fleeing the Third Reich to the United States, after which the book was banned. It is a theological critique of socialism, a critical interpretation of it which seeks to develop an argument for a religious socialism opposed to national socialism. Socialism, Tillich argues, finds its historical roots in German Romanticism and bourgeois society, extracting radical elements from each. Yet, he argues, socialism is plagued by an antinomy, a conflict between the world as it ought to be, and the world as it is. In order to resolve this conflict, a socialist *principle* or ground is needed. This principle is *expectation*, as opposed to the mythic ground of origin found in national socialism. Religion is able to give symbolic expression to these radical expectations, while socialism is able to breathe life into religious symbols, symbols which, in being displayed, represent their own vulnerability to interpretation and thus critique.

### **Phenomenology**

Although Heidegger could have been placed in this section, for the sake of the chronological ordering of the bibliography, *Being and Time* is placed in an earlier section. Both Husserl, the founder of phenomenology, and Löwith, a student of Heidegger who became one of the chief critics of his teacher's affiliation with the Nazi party, appear here. The consciousness of the mind is interrogated in light of the horrors of National Socialism. Both authors, interestingly, deal with the notion of history differently. Husserl seeks to ground historical reflection on an ideal, while Löwith seeks to vacate history of any self-evident meaning, turning instead to theology as a source of meaning.

Husserl, Edmund, "Philosophy and the Crisis of European Man," in *Phenomenology and the Crisis of Philosophy*. Translated by Quentin Lauer. New York: Harper & Row, 1965. (1935)

Delivered during the early years of the Third Reich, this lecture seeks to discover a solution to the crisis of Europe. This crisis, Husserl argues, stems from the “exteriorization” of reason, “its absorption in ‘naturalism’ and ‘objectivism.’” The only possibility for a “rebirth” out of the ashes of this “barbarian hatred of spirit” is to subject Europe, as Husserl himself does in this lecture, to critical theoretical reflection. In so doing, a critique of the causes and sources of the crisis also gives way to a teleology, a definition of Europe in accordance with rationalistic ideals which transcend nationalisms. Europe must be referred to the infinite task of an ideal, which in turn furnishes a “universal critique of all life” so as to “elevate mankind.”

Karl Löwith, *Meaning in History: The Theological Implications of the Philosophy of History*. Chicago: The University of Chicago Press, 1949.

Löwith was a student of Heidegger and Husserl. He was of Jewish descent, and, after fleeing Germany in 1934, condemned the former of his teachers for his involvement with the Nazi Party. In this work, Löwith critiques the modern notion of progress, which he sees as underlying the crimes of the Nazi Regime. This critique moves backwards in history, moving from the most contemporary (Burckhardt, Marx, Hegel) back to the ancient (Augustine, the Bible), thus presenting historically remote works in the light of the modern. Progress, he argues, is a failed attempt to give secular form to Christian eschatology, locating meaning in a holistic picture of history. Löwith argues that history in and of itself is meaningless, that a “philosophy of history” is not possible insofar as it seeks the meaningful thread of progress. Instead, we are left with the possibilities of theology, which can provide a “transcendental principle” which relativizes history while providing a source for meaning beyond it. After clearing history, including the history of thought, he himself presents his own theological interpretation of history.

### **The Kyoto School**

While the Kyoto School was a collective of Japanese philosophers in Japan, and while their identification with the German intellectual tradition is contestable, given the complexity and diversity of their thought, they are here placed because the listed works give interesting twists to the notion of critique. It is interesting to read them alongside the other thinkers listed in the bibliography, as intellectuals concerned with religion and its place in the modern world.

Hajime Tanabe, *Philosophy as Metanoetics*. Translated by James Heisig. Nagoya, Japan: Chisokudo Publications, 2016. (1945)

In this work, authored at the tail-end of World War II, Tanabe, who studied under Husserl and Heidegger, takes up Kant’s critique of reason. Yet Tanabe wishes to go further. His critique takes the form of a *metanoesis*, or repentance, from that reason he now finds in complete crisis in the face of radical evil. This repentant critique, which turns into a self-negation of a self-grounded, autonomous reason, finds its ground on “Other Power,” a radically dispossessive Absolute, which leads to the “Great Death” of reason and from it a rebirth of thought. The negativity which grounds the critique Tanabe calls “Absolute Nothingness.” Tanabe, as is typical of the Kyoto School, synthesizes the German philosophical tradition, namely via Heidegger, with Zen philosophy, and in this work seeks to subject that form of self-enclosed reason which he sees as tied to the violence and horrors of the twentieth century. The nothingness that is its ground remains opaque to reason, an opacity which sets in motion constantly renewing reflection.

Nishitani, Keiji. *Religion and Nothingness*. Translated by Jan Van Bragt. Berkeley: UC Press, 1983. (1961)

A member of the Kyoto School and student of Martin Heidegger, Nishitani in this collection of essays brings Zen Buddhist philosophy into dialogue with Western, continental philosophy and Christian thought. This comparison leads to a critique of the latter for its tendency towards nihilism, or relative nothingness. Nishitani offers concepts of Zen thought, namely *sunyata*, or Nothingness, as a way of overcoming nihilism. These essays place the thought of two continents side by side, and through comparison, seeks to resolve conceptual problems in Western thought. Ultimately, then, this work seeks to present the writer's reading of the Zen intellectual tradition by placing it in relation to another.